

IMPRESSIONS OF
THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

THOUGH the 'Great Lone Land' is no longer a *terra incognita* to the reading public at home, there is not enough known about Manitoba, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia by the people of the United Kingdom. This is a pity; as I am persuaded, after a pretty extensive tour through those regions during last autumn, that if anything like full and true information of the real extent, fruitfulness of soil, and unequalled advantages of this immense and interesting portion of the Empire were in possession of the public of Great Britain and Ireland, the North-West would not long remain so thinly populated.

Want of fuller information is not the only obstacle to the creation of a deeper interest in the subject of these countries. There is a good deal which must be unlearned about Manitoba and its adjacent provinces before a true estimate of their worth and attractiveness can be formed. The means and methods employed to colonise them have not been the happiest in plans or most fruitful in results. A generally wrong impression is conveyed in the pictorial representations of Canada, in which she is invariably represented to Europeans as a female, attractive-looking of course, but always clad in furs and living in a land of snow shoes and ice palaces. The climate of North-Western Canada is little, if any, colder than that of north Minnesota, north Dakota, and other portions of the United States; but we never find the practical Americans giving a figurative representation of their country suggestive of perpetual winter in any part of their great Republic.

Manitoba, which has been given a very bad climatic reputation, has not an average of more than a few degrees more cold than western Nebraska. Frosts are earlier, it is true, and the injury with which they menace the wheat harvest is the one real drawback and danger to the farming industry of an otherwise exceptionally favoured land. But this is a danger which is certain to decrease, in proportion to the growth of population and the singular but sure influence which the tillage of the soil, the erection of dwellings, and the other

necessary labours of an inhabited country exercise upon its climate. If, as the farmers of Ontario say, the clapping of the rooster's wings prevents freezing within the barn, the smoke of villages, the making of roads, erection of fences, and the application of the plough to the prairie sod will necessarily modify the climate, as has been the case in northern Minnesota, and produce other variations of temperature which will make the Manitoban and Assiniboian autumn frosts less injurious to the cultivation of wheat and other cereal products, and the winters less preventive of active open-air work.

I sought for the opinions of the Crofters at Glenboro and Pelican Lake on this subject of the Manitoban winter, and in no instance was it complained that the cold was injurious to health, or, except in brief intervals, prohibitive of such outdoor work as has to be done round a farmhouse in that season. I also canvassed the views of some of my own countrymen at Calgary and other places upon this point, and received a similar account. Thirty degrees below zero all but freezes one's imagination where, as in Ireland and Great Britain, the glass at thirty above it sends those who can afford it off to sunnier climes, and makes those who cannot sigh for the return of summer. The cold in northern regions like Manitoba is, however, dry and exhilarating in its effects, and produces none of the chills and kindred consequences to health associated with a winter in a damp climate like that of the United Kingdom. People affected with asthma, or suffering from other chest diseases, fare well in the North-West. That it is intensely cold in mid-winter in Manitoba goes without saying. But, I am convinced, the climate of that province is no more severe upon the human body than that of Nebraska, Wyoming, north Minnesota, or north Dakota in the United States; the only difference being that arising from the more populous and more developed condition of these localities, as compared with Manitoba, Assiniboia and Alberta. The climate of British Columbia, notwithstanding its latitude, is as mild in winter as that of the United Kingdom, but far more enjoyable in summer than ours.

Mr. John Morley's historic expression, 'Manacles and Manitoba,' has not tended to popularise colonisation in the North-West. It has helped rather to create the impression that the country is a British Siberia, to which no one should go by choice, and to which Lord Salisbury hoped to send the Irish peasantry—there to perish from the rigours of an Arctic clime. I knew something about 'manacles' of old, and I learned a good deal, last fall, about Manitoba; and bad as the first part of the Salisburian remedy is, the second or geographical part, seriously considered, is not deserving of being coupled even in metaphor with the major proposition of Tory policy of Ireland.

But what has done most harm to Manitoba and the adjacent Territories, in my belief, is the class of settler whom the agents for the Dominion Government in Europe have sought after most. The

'Small Capitalist' is a very useful member of society anywhere, where he is not too much of a capitalist, or of a gentleman, to work with hands or brains, particularly with the former. In a new country the 'capital' is an invaluable asset when it is translated into ploughs, horses, cattle, &c. But when it is not in itself large enough to enable the owner to live on the labour of others, and the possessor has neither inclination to work nor experience how to have his industrial incapacity neutralised by aid of his money, he is not of much account as a settler. In my inquiries about the relative success of various classes of colonists, I found that in almost every instance where a man brought a pair of willing hands and some knowledge of land labour with him he succeeded, even without a penny capital to start with. Where a small amount of money alone was the equipment, and there was neither industrial training nor labour inclination, the settler either went to the wall, left the country, or joined the mounted police. All those who thus failed placed the blame, of course, upon the country and climate. As a countryman of mine said to me in Calgary upon this subject: 'We have had a large number of young Englishmen out here with some money, but little brains and less love for labour. They dressed themselves on arrival in picturesque cowboy costume, rode about on Indian ponies during the day, tried to teach us the Cockney way of pronouncing Manitoba, played cards and gambled until the small hours in the morning, lost their money, and went to bed cursing the country. More remittances from home would be demanded by these gentlemen, and in the end such 'Colonists' either returned to England, with harrowing accounts of Manitoban winters and mosquito summers, and a conclusion that the North-West was only suitable for Indians and Halfbreeds, or they remained dead broke and volunteered to watch the cattle thieves and frontiers, as mounted police, for fifty cents a day.'

Almost every European nationality is represented in the colonisation of Manitoba and Assiniboia—Icelanders and Italians, Russians and Jews, French and Germans, Bulgarians, &c. The best and most successful farmers are from Ontario. Among the foreign settlers, the Icelanders, who are coming over in large numbers, are spoken of very highly for their industry, sobriety, and strict honesty. They contract no debts, and pay cash for all purchases. A Mannanite settlement in Southern Manitoba is remarkable for its exclusiveness. They are dissenting Russians, and do not inter-marry or hold social intercourse with other settlers. They occupy some of the best lands in Manitoba, and, being very industrious and thrifty, are reputed wealthy.

At Regina, the seat of Government for the Territories of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, I had an interesting interview with a settler who was one of a community of seventy families who

had left Southern Russia seven years ago—'not,' said my informant, 'on account of the large farms which we now possess, but in order to enjoy greater liberty and to pay less taxes.' These interesting people went to Southern Russia, during the wars of the first Napoleon, from Bavaria. They are all Catholics. They settled in Assiniboia a few years ago, built their cabins and outhouses in Russian style, and are now free from all debt and doing remarkably well. They are engaged at present in bringing over all their friends. I found very few Irish or English employed on the land. They are in the towns, and affect professions, trade, and speculation more than agriculture. In Winnipeg, Brandon, Regina, and Calgary, in Manitoba and the Territories, and in Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster, in British Columbia, there are many able and enterprising Irishmen who are identified with all that is being done to develop the North-West. The best possible feeling obtains between the British and Irish nationalities, though the efforts that are being made in Lower Canada to extend the Orange organisation throughout the entire Dominion are calculated to keep alive the old religious and racial animosities. There is no fear, however, of this politico-religious anachronism doing much mischief of this kind. The English-speaking inhabitants are too well educated, and too much imbued with democratic principles, to allow Orange bogies to beget a recrudescence of the evils which are historically associated with the introduction of this movement into Canada.

Not the least interesting part of a tour in these new countries is the study of their methods of administering their own affairs. A Home Ruler is thoroughly at home in the North-West. Some one has truly said that it is necessary to visit the British colonies in order to see and learn the real application of constitutional principles to practical popular government. Hereditary legislators are as ridiculously absurd to the Canadian mind as to that of Uncle Sam over the border. 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people' is as firmly held to in the institutions and politics of the Dominion as in those of the United States. In many respects the constitution of Canada is more thoroughly democratic than that of the neighbouring Republic. In the provincial Parliaments a still further advance has been made towards securing direct popular control. The Federal Legislature of Canada has two chambers. Ontario, the most prosperous and the best ruled of the provinces of Lower Canada, has, however, adopted the unicameral system. So has Manitoba and British Columbia. Manhood suffrage prevails in the North-West, with a six months residential qualification. There is payment of members also, along with that of election expenses; with, however, the proviso—for the prevention of bogus candidatures and waste of public money—that each candidate shall deposit 200 dollars on nomination, which money is returned if 200 or more votes are

recorded for such candidate. The Manitoban Parliament is elected every four years.

In the social and industrial organisation of these embryo communities, it is also satisfactory to find that vested interests are not allowed to dominate the natural and domestic rights of the citizen, as in the landlord- and lawyer-ridden United Kingdom. A homestead law, even more favourable to industry and home life than that of the United States, obtains in the North-Western Territories.

The following real and personal property are declared exempt from seizure by virtue of all writs of execution issued by any court in the Territories (Revised Ordinances N.W.T. cap. 45):—

1. Clothing of defendant and family.
2. Furniture and household furnishings of defendant and family, to value of \$500.
3. Necessary food for defendant's family for six months, which may include grain and flour, or vegetables and meat, either prepared for use or on foot.
4. Two cows, two oxen, and one horse, or three horses or mules; six sheep and two pigs, besides the animals kept for food purposes, and food for same during the six months beginning in November.
5. Harness for three animals, one waggon or two carts, one mower or scythe, one breaking plough, one cross-plough, one set harrows, one horse-rake, one sewing machine, one reaper and binder.
6. Books of a professional man.
7. Tools and necessities used by defendant in trade or profession.
8. Seed grain sufficient to seed all land under cultivation not exceeding eighty acres (two bushels to acre, and fourteen bushels of potatoes).
9. Homestead up to eighty acres.
10. House and buildings, and lot or lots upon which same are situated, up to the sum of \$1,500 in value.

No article (except of food, clothing, or bedding) is exempt from seizure where the judgment and execution are for the price of such article.

The treatment of the native Indians is far more humane and enlightened in the Canadian North-West than the system of extermination by commissioners and rum adopted by the Government of the United States. This is due mainly to the long and arduous labours of the French Catholic missionary priests. The Canadian Government has done its part, however, in the work of inducing the former occupants and masters of this immense section of the North American continent to put off the customs of savage for the habits of civilised life. No drink can be sold in the North-West to an Indian under a severe penalty—including, I believe, the forfeiture of a license to sell intoxicating liquor in future. One of the prettiest pictures in the unrivalled scenic panorama of Vancouver city, in British Columbia, is that presented by an Indian village of white houses, with a white church in the centre, peeping out from a forest of pines on the banks of Burrard Inlet. The inhabitants all live by fishing or lumber industry. At New Westminster, on the Fraser

River, I visited the salmon canneries of McEwan & Co., where some 200 Indians are employed. I saw by the books of the establishment that some of these earned as much as \$900 in a six weeks' fishing last year. Those who worked within the cannery earned over two dollars a day, while squaws were paid one and a quarter. The manager assured me that the Indians were better workers than the Chinese, and earned more money. During the close season for salmon and game, the Indians are by law allowed to fish and shoot for 'the pot.' On completing a most interesting inspection of Mr. McEwan's establishment, I was 'serenaded' by a brass band, composed entirely of full-breed Indians, with *The Harp that once through Tara's Halls*—admirably rendered, too, from written music!

No description, however full and eloquent, can do justice to the scenery of the Canadian Rockies and British Columbia. The human eye alone can do so. The countless giant peaks, clothed in everlasting robes of snow, the glaciers, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, valleys, and pine woods which pass before the gaze of the bewildered traveller from Banff, in Alberta, to Vancouver would make half-a-dozen Switzerlands, and leave enough of Alpine material and glacier wonders over to supply every other country in Europe with as much of the marvellous and the sublime in nature as would suffice for home admiration. Going down the enchanting cañon of the Fraser, one is puzzled which to marvel at most—the variety and beauty and wild extravagance of scenic grandeur, or the daring genius of man, as seen in the construction of a railway through a region where precipitous, but timber-clad, mountains and roaring torrent were apparently intended by nature to reign supreme. Lamartine, in his *Voyage en Orient*, v. of the effect which the first sight of the ruins of Balbec made upon his mind, said that if a language existed which would convey in a word as much as the eye could take in at a glance, it alone would enable him to describe the views before him in a manner that would interpret his impressions of them to his readers. A language of this compass would be needed in order to give a true conception of the five hundred miles continuation of every possible combination of natural scenery along which the Canadian Pacific Railway carries the tourist, from Banff, on the summit of the Rockies, to Vancouver, on the banks of Burrard Inlet.

Everybody you meet, from Winnipeg to Victoria, talks emigration. In the trains, hotels, and streets it is the one subject a stranger will have introduced to him by whomever he asks for information. You cannot help sympathising with this feeling, although, to a large extent, its source is found in land speculation. Apart from this sympathy, however, it was profoundly discouraging to find the evil hand of landlord absenteeism holding its grip upon the country and keeping back its development. The lands granted by the Dominion

Government to the half-breeds, in the immediate neighbourhood of Winnipeg, are among the richest in the province. Two hundred and forty acres were given to each member of a family, but were sold by them to speculators for little or nothing. These purchasers are mostly absentees, and the lands thus acquired are held for speculative values by people residing in Lower Canada and England, while the city of Winnipeg has to suffer from thousands of acres of soil lying idle in its immediate vicinity, which if occupied and cultivated would add enormously to the prosperity of the handsome and progressive capital of Manitoba. The same state of things exists, more or less, in connection with every city and town throughout the entire North-West, and it is most sincerely to be hoped that the men who have helped so far by residence, pluck, and enterprise to organise these centres of industry and reclaim the country around from prairie savagery will soon demand from the Dominion Legislature the power to tax the absentee owners of all lands—and residential owners, to a less extent—so as to compel them either to put the soil of the country to its legitimate use, or to pay in taxation to local authorities for the privilege of holding it in idleness.

No matter what one's views upon emigration may be—and mine are very radical and have been frequently stated—it is impossible to visit this vast and naturally rich region of the North-West, with its all but limitless extent of rich loamy-subsoiled land, without a yearning for the transplantation of some of the dense population of parts of Great Britain to these fruitful prairies. When one has to call to mind the slum-life of London, the squalid quarters of the working poor in Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, and other large centres of crowded social life, and the conditions under which tens of thousands of such people live—while, on the other hand, he views, day after day, millions of acres of arable soil hungering for the application of food-producing labour, it is impossible not to have one's opinions influenced more or less in favour of a movement which might ease and tend to eradicate these demoralising conditions of labour-life in Great Britain, while removing their victims to the advantages of those all but unpeopled regions of bracing air, and healthful life, and latent opportunities of a better and brighter social existence. It would, however, be a huge mistake to bring some of the class of people who overcrowd our cities at home out to the North-West. They are not the kind of colonists whom the country would suit, or who could help in its development. Men or women who work in factories or employ themselves in the smaller handicrafts and miscellaneous occupations of centres of complex industrial organisation, would be like fishes out of water where the main, if not only, form of labour is in connection with land. Those who have been brought up to agriculture, or who have strength and willingness to work the land, are the class of colonists who are wanted, and to whom

Manitoba or British Columbia would offer a field of industry in which a new social life of comparative comfort could be won in a few years' time.

The emigration of such settlers would likewise excite less opposition from Trade Unions at home and in Canada. Rightly, and reasonably enough, the organised workmen of the Canadian cities object most strongly to the importation of artisans, mechanics, and labourers (non-agricultural), who would crowd the labour market of the Dominion, lower wages by competition, and become a disturbing element in the economic relations between labour and capital. These objections, however, could not be urged against land-workers, who might be brought out, or induced to come under plans that would insure their being located where good land, and plenty of it, would provide immediate employment to such intending settlers. The advent of such a class would be hailed as directly advantageous to the interests of skilled industry in Canada. The more farmers the country possesses, the more work there necessarily is for the general mechanic. The emigration of a large number of agricultural labourers from Great Britain should also be viewed with less hostility by leaders of the labour movement and radical social reformers at home. The country worker is the chief disturber of the labour market of our cities and towns. The causes of his voluntary or involuntary migration are too well known to need dwelling upon here. The problem now is how to keep those on the land who have not yet migrated, and how best to put those back who have. In the solution of such a problem lies a hope of a better and higher future for both land and town labour. Legislation is at last moving in the direction which will facilitate such a reform, though we are not likely to witness anything like a boom in land labour until public ownership of the soil replaces that of the landlords. When that day arrives—and we are moving rapidly towards it—capital in its struggle with labour will have less of the 'blackleg' class of competing workmen to fall back upon in such conflicts as may arise, while organised workmen in cities and towns will have a better chance of winning a fairer share of the wealth produced by the country than that which they obtain under existing economic conditions. In the meantime, however, and pending the radical changes which are in the contemplation of those 'who dream dreams' which have acquired the habit of becoming embodied in legislative programmes evolved from competing Liberal and Tory parties, the colonisation of the countries of the North-West by such past and present victims of landlord monopoly as would be willing to go from wage-slavery to practical social independence, would work on parallel lines to the 'back to the land' movement in Great Britain and Ireland.

I visited two of the crofter settlements during my tour—one at Glenboro, and the other at Pelican Lake, both in Manitoba. The

remaining colony, that of Saltcoates, north-west of Winnipeg, I did not go to, as I became satisfied, after interviewing about a dozen heads of families in the two first-named places, that visitors from the 'old country' do more harm than good to these particular settlers. It creates an impression on their minds that public opinion at home is actively agitated on their account, and that 'something more' remains yet to be done for them. In a very few instances this feeling of expectancy has produced discontent, and led to idleness. But all to whom I spoke admitted they were far better off than they ever would have been had they remained in Harris, Lewis, or the other parts of the Crofter Highlands whence they hailed.

John McLeod, from near Stornoway, I found farming a whole section of 640 acres. He had 120 acres under wheat, and was breaking seventy more for this year's sowing. Himself and three sons worked the land, with three yokes of oxen and a team of horses. The old man told me he had five head of cattle, and that he was well satisfied with the country, and expected to do very well on his farm. He contrasted its extent and his future prospects with the three-acre croft on which he had lived for over forty years in the Island of Lewis, and his only regret was that he could not bring his two daughters and a brother, who were still in Stornoway, out to his new home. He assured me that all his crofter neighbours at Pelican Lake were doing well, though they, like himself, were still in debt to the grocers in Killarney (the market town for Pelican Lake), owing to the two bad years which followed their arrival from Scotland.

Donald McDonald, of Lewis, said he was well contented, but would like to pay Lewis a visit. He owns 160 acres, fifty being under wheat, and possesses a yoke of oxen and three cows.

John McKenzie, senior, from Lewis, would like to return home. He had been more of a fisherman than a crofter, and he 'longed for the sea breeze.' He had fifty acres under wheat, and was apparently doing well.

Kenneth Macaulay, also from Lewis, was delighted with his log house, sixty-five acres of wheat (on a quarter-section of 160 acres), three acres of oats, two cows, and yoke of oxen; but his son denounced the whole of Manitoba, and all those who had helped to bring him there. His father, however, blamed 'the disturber from Saltcoates,' who had visited Pelican Lake, for the discontent which young Kenneth expressed, and assured me that it had no real meaning.

Donald McDonald, Angus McDonald, John Morrison, and Allan McLeod farm a section (640 acres) in conjunction. I saw 260 acres of this under wheat, while each had some five acres of oats in addition. They also possessed a yoke of oxen each, and from two to four cows.

I drove by the log cabins of a dozen more of the crofters in this settlement, and saw their fields of wheat, promising at that time (August last) to free the owners from the debts which had been incurred in 1888 and 1889, in consequence of the unseasonable period of their arrival, and the bad wheat season which followed. I am thoroughly satisfied, from what I have seen of these crofters, from their own admissions, and the additional information obtained from old settlers near them, that, with ordinary industry, they are certain to become prosperous farmers in a few years' time.

Before leaving the subject of crofter colonisation in the North-West, I think it well to say a few words with reference to a proposed settlement of this class in the San Juan Valley, on Vancouver Island. Upon learning in Victoria that it was intended to carry out such a scheme, and that the Imperial Government had promised 50,000*l.* towards the locating of two hundred crofter families in this valley, I resolved to pay the place a visit, and see if it was adapted for such a settlement. Port San Juan is almost opposite Cape Flattery, at the entrance to the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, and about sixty miles by sea from Victoria, B.C. The harbour is about a mile and a half wide at the entrance, and three deep, with an average of six fathoms of water. The rivers San Juan and Gordon empty themselves into the bay at opposite extremities. Both are narrow rivers, full of silver salmon and trout. 'Port San Juan' consists of about twenty Indian cabins, whose owners live by the seal fishing in the Behring Seas. The San Juan Valley is very heavily timbered, except where some few miles from the village it is flooded by a jamb, caused by an accumulation of logs. The valley is a Government reservation, and consists of about twelve thousand acres, and by far the most of this is composed of mountain, which is too steep and unsuitable, even when cleared of timber, for tillage purposes—at least, as seen from the Indian village. The valley would be a Paradise for sportsmen, as deer, elk, and black-bear are numerous, while there is an abundance of ducks and geese, which appear to inhabit almost every part of the North-West. The place would not answer for a crofter settlement. It would take years before the timber could be lumbered away, and crofters are not the right class of people for work of this kind. There are other parts of British Columbia which would be much better adapted for such a class of colonists than the Valley of the San Juan. I was informed by people who know the country well that around Alberni and near Port Simpson, on Vancouver Island, there are Government lands more or less free from timber. At Kootenay, Okanogan, and Chilliwick, on the mainland of British Columbia, there is an abundance of the richest land available for tillage, but it is all, I believe, in the hands of speculating companies. This is also the case with respect to the land in the delta of the Fraser River, the richest soil to be found possibly on any part of the North American

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continent. It reminds one very much of the fat soil of Lombardy along the river Po. The charming little city of New Westminster is situated near the very centre of this favoured corner of the province, and no one visiting British Columbia should think of leaving before paying a visit to this city. The famous salmon-canneries of the Fraser are to be found here, while numerous other forms of industrial prosperity are contributing to make this 'royal city,' as it is called, a rich and thriving community. To no part of the North-West would English or Irish agricultural labourers, or Scotch crofters, be more welcome than to this section of the province; but there is, unfortunately, this drawback—that the Government has given away all its best lands, which are held for speculative values by absentee and other owners, and colonists would therefore have to pay stiff prices (though ridiculously small in European eyes), as compared with the cost of land in Manitoba or Assiniboia, for holdings in the favoured region of New Westminster.

It is this state of things, more than any other cause, which still leaves these naturally favoured countries of the North-West comparatively unpopulated. All the best land has been given away to railway companies, 'free, gratis, and for nothing,' or sold for little or nothing to syndicates, companies, corporations, and individual speculators. These owners are mostly absentees, and are doing absolutely nothing (railway companies excepted) towards the development of a country over millions of acres of whose soil they hold a monopoly. They are simply waiting for the advent of that population which will give value to their possessions; while the Government, which desires to attract colonists, has parted with those very lands which would offer the strongest inducement to settlers to come. This is especially true of British Columbia, and more is the pity, because, taken all round, in mildness of climate, loveliness of scenery, richness of soil, and in the variety and abundance of its mineral wealth, it is the most favoured of all the North-Western countries, and is destined in my belief to become, in the near future, an irresistible attraction to Americans, as well as to Europeans, desiring a change of home location.

To propose the colonisation of the Canadian North-West by means of one or two hundred thousand agricultural labourers from Great Britain will seem a 'large order.' The opponents of emigration will be up in arms at once in opposition to any such suggestion. Paradoxical as it may appear, I am not, and never have been, an advocate of emigration. My present proposal is made homœopathically. It would, if carried out, promote many interests which have not been benefited by the process of emigration that has called forth the objections of radical land reformers, and other labour advocates, who demand the full utilisation of the soil of Great Britain for labour purposes before British workers are sent away to colonial or other

countries in search of work which is practically denied them at home through the operation of the rent-earning system of land tenure. To withdraw 100,000 land-workers from the agricultural industry of these countries would enhance the price of the labour that would remain. Wages would necessarily go up, while the influx of labourers from the country into towns would be diminished, to the advantage of town toilers. Farmers would grumble at a scarcity of labour, and the certainty of a higher price having to be paid for the diminished quantity. Ultimately, however, the landlord would have to bear the burden of higher wages to land-labourers, as his sleeping-partner interest in land cultivation will be that which will justly and reasonably lend itself, in the form of lower rents, to the demands for the better payment of agricultural working men. Protests will come from this gentleman also, no doubt. This, however, will only lead to a British Land Commission and the fixing of fair rents by judicial process, as now obtains in Ireland; after submitting to which experience the English, Welsh, and Scotch, like the Irish, landlord will advocate a Purchase Act, or Landlord Relief Bill for Great Britain. Whether by the process of being bought out, or of being taxed out, the landlord must, of economic necessity, go. The sooner the better for the industrial welfare of three countries. When he is replaced by County or District or Village Councils, the anomaly of vested interest barriers standing between idle acres and idle but willing hands to work them will no longer mock the absence of a little common-sense in our land laws.

When land is looked at and legislated upon as a medium for the employment of labour—and consequently for food-production—and not as a means of growing rent, or of providing a social status for a landed aristocracy, it will be unnecessary to advocate the manning of the land of Manitoba with Scotch crofters or English agricultural labourers. It will be remembered when such a day arrives, that we have inside this United Kingdom more soil lying idle, but capable of giving work and growing food, than is comprised within the kingdom of Belgium, with its 5,000,000 of an industrial population. Such a day is rapidly approaching, no doubt. 'The land for the people' period of legislation is dawning, and we shall soon see Mr. Chaplin's Bill amended in the two directions in which it is most defective—to give to Village Councils the right of expropriating landlord owners, and empowering them to administer the land in the way which will best promote the industrial interests of the locality. When the Community becomes the landlord, land will not be left idle if willing hands are ready to employ themselves in its cultivation. It will be recognised then that if the soil can do no more than give employment to farmer and labourer, the all-round economic advantage to other industrial classes will be of far greater benefit to the country at large than the social status of a single proprietor who can

now determine whether or not it shall be cultivated or allowed to lie useless. And if economic rent accrues, all the better for the Community.

But that day is not yet. In the meantime, the lot of the landless agricultural labour excites the active sympathy of reformers and demands the attention of the Legislature. He is also a disturber of the labour market in industrial centres. He is virtually driven off the land, by low wages and a cheerless prospect, into the towns and cities, or he voluntarily goes there in search of a more varied existence; and in the struggle to obtain his desires he brings down the wages of other workers, adds to the congestion of city life, and creates the social problem.

A great Imperial purpose would likewise be promoted by colonising the North-West by such a class as that indicated. Canada, of itself, cannot develop this extensive region of rich soil. She has neither the means nor the population to do so. She has done her best, but that, much as it is when her limited resources are considered, counts for very little compared with what the vastness of the territory hungering for population requires, if it is to remain a part of the Dominion, and its boundless possibilities are to be opened up to labour and enterprise.

Annexation may or may not be the best solution of the Canadian question. I found comparatively few in the North-West who favoured incorporation with the United States. Next to a desire to remain within the Empire was a feeling for independence; which sentiment, however, was held as a preference to annexation, and as contingent upon the Dominion and Imperial Governments failing to do for the North-West what the United States would undoubtedly perform, if the Stars and Stripes were permitted to supplant the Union Jack north of the international boundary line. Much as there is to admire in the government of the United States, I confess I would not wish to see it extend its sway across the St. Lawrence to the North Pole. It possesses quite enough of territory already. The further it is extended, the weaker will become the central influence which is ruling so wisely and so well so vast a continent, embracing communities including people of every European race, by the simple but efficient method of allowing the citizens of the Republic to manage their own affairs in their own way. No friend of free institutions would wish to see the federal system of the United States weakened. Its great object-lesson of government by the people will ultimately help to democratise all European Governments; and upon international grounds alone the acquisition of Canada by the United States would be a misfortune. Independent, Canada may become. She has the chance if she wills it, along with territory enough to form a heritage fit for an empire. But such independence, if established in defiance of the Imperial Government, would always be menaced by the

Republic of sixty or more millions over the border; and a Home Government which might neither consent to separation nor hold Canada by force if she insisted on going, would be under no obligation to prevent a conquest by Uncle Sam after Canada should cut the Imperial connection. The question for the North-West is, therefore, one of colonisation or annexation.

Things political and economic cannot remain much longer as they are now in Canada without producing a smash. Ontario is the only one of the provinces financially sound. All the others are immersed in debt, with no credit upon which to borrow; while the recent exposures of malversation, both in connection with the Dominion Administration and the Government of Quebec, are not calculated to help the country at large to get its finances into a satisfactory condition for some time to come. Bad as all this is for Lower Canada, it spells all but ruin for the North-West, unless a remedy can be found. The Territories not yet admitted, for want of population, to the privileges of a province have recently demanded an increase in their annual federal subsidy from \$150,000 to \$400,000; and as Ontario has, practically, to provide these moneys for the Dominion Government to grant towards the development of a part of Canada which has already enticed a large number of Ontario farmers to 'fresh fields and pastures new,' there will be opposition offered to this enlarged demand when it comes up for consideration before the Ottawa Legislature. But without help in some shape or form, the North-West must inevitably fall into the hands of the United States. Manitoba has to get along with a united revenue and subsidy of some \$600,000. The combined administrative income of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, is no more than \$170,000 annually. I have not got the figures representing the revenue and federal subsidy of British Columbia, but I am safe in saying that the entire financial resources for the government of the whole North-West fall short of 300,000*l.* a year. Nothing in the way of a proper development of so vast an area can be accomplished upon a pauper revenue of this figure. It is true the Dominion Parliament votes money every year for colonisation purposes. This represents an additional assistance, I admit, and that too of the best kind; as the one essential need of these countries is population. But it is not by any means certain that the best results have been obtained in this work for the money expended. I found the opinion prevailing in Manitoba and the Territories that it would have been much more workable and advantageous if the Federal Legislature had loaned money at low interest to the North-West Provinces, and allowed them to carry out their own ideas as to the best means of bringing the right class of colonists to their lands.

Now that one of the finest railway systems in the world places the North-West in direct communication with the Atlantic seaboard,

it should be the aim of Imperial and Dominion statesmanship combined to substitute a better system for the spoon-feeding policy which has been so far pursued towards these Provinces, and which has not succeeded in giving them strength enough to utilise the immense resources with which they abound. A fair start should be given to them, and then throw them upon their own ways and means for necessary administrative revenue. An Imperial loan of 10,000,000*l.* at low interest, through the Dominion Government, would enable the Provinces and Territories to bring 100,000 select colonists from Great Britain, and such an addition to the present population—small as it would even then be for a country much larger than France—would give such a stimulus to the colonisation and development which have proceeded so far, that the future of this richest but most neglected part of the Colonial Empire would be assured. The interest upon such a loan might be charged in equal shares upon the Dominion Government and the Provinces and Territories of the North-West, but a ten years' grace might be given to the latter, during which period this half of the interest should remain an Imperial charge as a contribution to the work of development in that part of the Empire.

In my judgment, this would solve the whole difficulty of the Canadian North-West. Manitoba, British Columbia, and the Territories would plan and carry out their own colonisation work in the manner best suited to their respective requirements. They know now where the best kind of settlers come from, and, with the means at their disposal of inducing those that are wanted to come, no time would be lost in locating the imported industry where it is most needed and would produce the best results. The additional wheat cultivation and increase of other kinds of agriculture which 100,000 new farms must necessarily create, would soon operate to the great economic advantage of Lower Canada, which supplies all the farm implements in use in the North-West, as well as mostly all their other mechanical requirements, by means of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The increased wheat produce which would accrue would have an important bearing upon our Home markets, and make them less susceptible to the influence of American grain rings and 'dealings in futures.'

Nor would the money needed to accomplish this work be a bad investment from a purely Imperial point of view. The Canadian Pacific Railway has recently presented itself in quite a new light to some of our politicians who are wise enough to foresee a time when the Suez Canal may probably not answer as the safest route to India and China for British troops or transports. In an emergency which might arise any day, Mr. Van Horne and his incomparable system, by which Yokohama has been brought within twenty days of Liverpool, would become a priceless auxiliary to the War Office.

Should annexation be the indirect object at which the Washington Government is now aiming in McKinleying the products of the Dominion, the Canadian Pacific would, in the event of the success of this policy, be added to the Railway rings of the United States. A free and uniquely advantageous highway to the East and to the Australasian colonies would then be lost, and a great Imperial connecting link be broken beyond the possibility of repair.

There are those in Lower Canada, and of course in England too, who say that too much money has already been expended in the opening up of the North-West, and that the building of the Canadian Pacific has been a far too expensive enterprise from a Lower Canadian point of view. This is a very shortsighted view to take. Without the present and future development of the North-West to count upon, the fate of Lower Canada would be sealed. She might throw herself into the arms of the United States at once. Ten years from now the North-West will be far more necessary to Lower Canada than Lower Canada is to-day to British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Territories. The Canadian Pacific has annexed an empire of undeveloped resources to the Eastern section of the Dominion, which must ultimately be the economic salvation of the older but less naturally favoured Provinces. Certain I am, that if the Americans only knew more about the mineral resources of British Columbia, its wonderfully rich soil and teeming rivers, and of the riches represented in the vast areas of arable and pasture lands of the Territories and Manitoba, they would not hesitate in paying five times the amount of money that has been expended upon the North-West, in railways and other respects, in exchange for possessions representing untold material wealth and priceless political importance.

The World's Fair at Chicago next year will, of course, invite an immense number of visitors from the United Kingdom. Those who have already seen the grounds upon which the Exposition will stand, as I have, and who can therefore form some idea of the unparalleled proportions, yet symmetrical arrangement, of the whole plans, will be more or less prepared for the biggest, brightest, and best effort of the kind ever put forth. But to those who have not had this advantage, and who may never have visited the United States before, the Chicago Exposition will offer a series of attractions which will leave a lifelong agreeable recollection behind. Once at Chicago, a trip to the Canadian North-West would be but an affair of an additional ten or fifteen days, in which small space of time, however, it will be possible to see a comparatively unknown and magnificent country, and enjoy the 'Sea of Mountains,' as the Canadian Rockies have been called, together with the softer but yet wild and incomparably varied and enchanting scenery of the Cañon of the Fraser River, as that monarch of western waters rolls down through gorge and precipice and valley to the wooded plains of British Columbia. No one

who takes this trip will ever regret it, if he or she possesses a taste for beauty in Nature, or has a soul that can respond to the sublimities of her greatest handiwork in mountain making. The Canadian Pacific Railway is almost certain to arrange for such a trip in connection with the Chicago World's Fair. It will give British and Irish visitors a chance of seeing the North-West, and, as a better knowledge of its varied advantages is the essential thing required to push on the work of colonisation, it should be an object with the Canadian Pacific Railway to make terms and arrangements for such a trip as I suggest as enticing as possible to visitors from the United Kingdom. A day's stop-over at Winnipeg, Regina, Banff Hot Springs, Vancouver, and New Westminster, with, of course, a trip across to Victoria, in all of which places excellent hotel accommodation will be found, would enable the tourists to form some idea of the magnitude, resources, beauty, and general characteristics of a country which is destined, in my humble judgment, to become, even in the present generation, one of the most prosperous portions of the Colonial Empire.

MICHAEL DAVITT.